

DIVISION VI. Ethics Standards for Neutral Arbitrators in Contractual Arbitration

Standard 1. Purpose, intent, and construction

- (a) These standards are adopted under the authority of Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.85 and establish the minimum standards of conduct for neutral arbitrators who are subject to these standards. They are intended to guide the conduct of arbitrators, to inform and protect participants in arbitration, and to promote public confidence in the arbitration process.
- (b) For arbitration to be effective there must be broad public confidence in the integrity and fairness of the process. Arbitrators are responsible to the parties, the other participants, and the public for conducting themselves in accordance with these standards so as to merit that confidence.
- (c) These standards are to be construed and applied to further the purpose and intent expressed in subdivisions (a) and (b) and in conformance with all applicable law.
- (d) These standards are not intended to affect any existing civil cause of action or create any new civil cause of action.

Comment to Standard 1

Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.85 provides that, beginning July 1, 2002, a person serving as a neutral arbitrator pursuant to an arbitration agreement shall comply with the ethics standards for arbitrators adopted by the Judicial Council pursuant to that section.

While the grounds for vacating an arbitration award are established by statute, not these standards, an arbitrator's violation of these standards may, under some circumstances, fall within one of those statutory grounds. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 1286.2.) A failure to disclose within the time required for disclosure a ground for disqualification of which the arbitrator was then aware is a ground for vacatur of the arbitrator's award. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 1286.2(a)(6)(A).) Violations of other obligations under these standards may also constitute grounds for vacating an arbitration award under section 1286.2(a)(3) if "the rights of the party were substantially prejudiced" by the violation.

While vacatur may be an available remedy for violation of these standards, these standards are not intended to affect any civil cause of action that may currently exist nor to create any new civil cause of action. These standards are also not intended to establish a ceiling on what is considered good practice in arbitration or to discourage efforts to educate arbitrators about best practices.

Standard 2. Definitions

As used in these standards:

(a) [Arbitrator and neutral arbitrator]

- (1) “Arbitrator” and “neutral arbitrator” mean any arbitrator who is subject to these standards and who is to serve impartially, whether selected or appointed:
 - (A) Jointly by the parties or by the arbitrators selected by the parties;
 - (B) By the court, when the parties or the arbitrators selected by the parties fail to select an arbitrator who was to be selected jointly by them; or
 - (C) By a dispute resolution provider organization, under an agreement of the parties.
 - (2) Where the context includes events or acts occurring before an appointment is final, “arbitrator” and “neutral arbitrator” include a person who has been served with notice of a proposed nomination or appointment.
- (b)** “Applicable law” means constitutional provisions, statutes, decisional law, California Rules of Court, and other statewide rules or regulations that apply to arbitrators who are subject to these standards.
- (c)** “Conclusion of the arbitration” means the following:
- (1) When the arbitrator is disqualified or withdraws or the case is settled or dismissed before the arbitrator makes an award, the date on which the arbitrator’s appointment is terminated;
 - (2) When the arbitrator makes an award and no party makes a timely application to the arbitrator to correct the award, the final date for making an application to the arbitrator for correction; or
 - (3) When a party makes a timely application to the arbitrator to correct the award, the date on which the arbitrator serves a corrected award or a denial on each party, or the date on which denial occurs by operation of law.

- (d) “Consumer arbitration” means an arbitration conducted under a predispute arbitration provision contained in a contract that meets the criteria listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) below. “Consumer arbitration” excludes arbitration proceedings conducted under or arising out of public or private sector labor-relations laws, regulations, charter provisions, ordinances, statutes, or agreements.
- (1) The contract is with a consumer party, as defined in these standards;
 - (2) The contract was drafted by or on behalf of the nonconsumer party; and
 - (3) The consumer party was required to accept the arbitration provision in the contract.
- (e) “Consumer party” is a party to an arbitration agreement who, in the context of that arbitration agreement, is any of the following:
- (1) An individual who seeks or acquires, including by lease, any goods or services primarily for personal, family, or household purposes including, but not limited to, financial services, insurance, and other goods and services as defined in section 1761 of the Civil Code;
 - (2) An individual who is an enrollee, a subscriber, or insured in a health-care service plan within the meaning of section 1345 of the Health and Safety Code or health-care insurance plan within the meaning of section 106 of the Insurance Code;
 - (3) An individual with a medical malpractice claim that is subject to the arbitration agreement; or
 - (4) An employee or an applicant for employment in a dispute arising out of or relating to the employee’s employment or the applicant’s prospective employment that is subject to the arbitration agreement.
- (f) “Dispute resolution neutral” means a temporary judge appointed under article VI, section 21 of the California Constitution, a referee appointed under Code of Civil Procedure section 638 or 639, an arbitrator, a

neutral evaluator, a special master, a mediator, a settlement officer, or a settlement facilitator.

- (g) “Dispute resolution provider organization” and “provider organization” mean any nongovernmental entity that, or individual who, coordinates, administers, or provides the services of two or more dispute resolution neutrals.
- (h) “Domestic partner” means a domestic partner as defined in Family Code section 297.
- (i) “Financial interest” means a financial interest within the meaning of Code of Civil Procedure section 170.5.
- (j) “Gift” means a gift as defined in Code of Civil Procedure section 170.9(l).
- (k) “Honoraria” means honoraria as defined in Code of Civil Procedure section 170.9(h) and (i).
- (l) “Lawyer in the arbitration” means the lawyer hired to represent a party in the arbitration.
- (m) “Lawyer for a party” means the lawyer hired to represent a party in the arbitration and any lawyer or law firm currently associated in the practice of law with the lawyer hired to represent a party in the arbitration.
- (n) “Member of the arbitrator’s immediate family” means the arbitrator’s spouse or domestic partner and any minor child living in the arbitrator’s household.
- (o) “Member of the arbitrator’s extended family” means the parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, siblings, uncles, aunts, nephews, and nieces of the arbitrator or the arbitrator’s spouse or domestic partner or the spouse of such person.
- (p) **[Party]**
 - (1) “Party” means a party to the arbitration agreement:

- (A) Who seeks to arbitrate a controversy pursuant to the agreement;
 - (B) Against whom such arbitration is sought; or
 - (C) Who is made a party to such arbitration by order of a court or the arbitrator upon such party's application, upon the application of any other party to the arbitration, or upon the arbitrator's own determination.
- (2) "Party" includes the representative of a party, unless the context requires a different meaning.
- (q) "Party-arbitrator" means an arbitrator selected unilaterally by a party.
- (r) "Private practice of law" means private practice of law as defined in Code of Civil Procedure section 170.5.
- (s) "Significant personal relationship" includes a close personal friendship.

Comment to Standard 2

Subdivision (a). The definition of "arbitrator" and "neutral arbitrator" in this standard is intended to include all arbitrators who are to serve in a neutral and impartial manner and to exclude unilaterally selected arbitrators.

Subdivisions (l) and (m). Arbitrators should take special care to note that there are two different terms used in these standards to refer to lawyers who represent parties in the arbitration. In particular, arbitrators should note that the term "lawyer for a party" includes any lawyer or law firm currently associated in the practice of law with the lawyer hired to represent a party in the arbitration.

Subdivision (p)(2). While this provision generally permits an arbitrator to provide required information or notices to a party's attorney as that party's representative, a party's attorney should not be treated as a "party" for purposes of identifying matters that an arbitrator must disclose under standards 7 or 8, as those standards contain separate, specific requirements concerning the disclosure of relationships with a party's attorney.

Other terms that may be pertinent to these standards are defined in Code of Civil Procedure section 1280.

Standard 3. Application and effective date

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this standard and standard 8, these standards apply to all persons who are appointed to serve as neutral

arbitrators on or after July 1, 2002, in any arbitration under an arbitration agreement, if:

- (1) The arbitration agreement is subject to the provisions of title 9 of part III of the Code of Civil Procedure (commencing with section 1280); or
 - (2) The arbitration hearing is to be conducted in California.
- (b)** These standards do not apply to:
- (1) Party arbitrators, as defined in these standards; or
 - (2) Any arbitrator serving in:
 - (A) An international arbitration proceeding subject to the provisions of title 9.3 of part III of the Code of Civil Procedure;
 - (B) A judicial arbitration proceeding subject to the provisions of chapter 2.5 of title 3 of part III of the Code of Civil Procedure;
 - (C) An attorney-client fee arbitration proceeding subject to the provisions of article 13 of chapter 4 of division 3 of the Business and Professions Code;
 - (D) An automobile warranty dispute resolution process certified under California Code of Regulations title 16, division 33.1;
 - (E) An arbitration of a workers' compensation dispute under Labor Code sections 5270 through 5277;
 - (F) An arbitration conducted by the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board under Labor Code section 5308;
 - (G) An arbitration of a complaint filed against a contractor with the Contractors State License Board under Business and Professions Code sections 7085 through 7085.7; or
 - (H) An arbitration conducted under or arising out of public or private sector labor-relations laws, regulations, charter provisions, ordinances, statutes, or agreements.

- (c) Persons who are serving in arbitrations in which they were appointed to serve as arbitrators before July 1, 2002, are not subject to these standards in those arbitrations. Persons who are serving in arbitrations in which they were appointed to serve as arbitrators before January 1, 2003, are not subject to standard 8 in those arbitrations.

Comment to Standard 3

With the exception of standard 8, these standards apply to all neutral arbitrators appointed on or after July 1, 2002, who meet the criteria of subdivision (a). Arbitration provider organizations, although not themselves subject to these standards, should be aware of them when performing administrative functions that involve arbitrators who are subject to these standards. A provider organization's policies and actions should facilitate, not impede, compliance with the standards by arbitrators who are affiliated with the provider organization.

Standard 4. Duration of duty

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in these standards, an arbitrator must comply with these ethics standards from acceptance of appointment until the conclusion of the arbitration.
- (b) If, after the conclusion of the arbitration, a case is referred back to the arbitrator for reconsideration or rehearing, the arbitrator must comply with these ethics standards from the date the case is referred back to the arbitrator until the arbitration is again concluded.

Standard 5. General duty

An arbitrator must act in a manner that upholds the integrity and fairness of the arbitration process. He or she must maintain impartiality toward all participants in the arbitration at all times.

Comment to Standard 5

This standard establishes the overarching ethical duty of arbitrators. The remaining standards should be construed as establishing specific requirements that implement this overarching duty in particular situations.

Maintaining impartiality toward all participants during all stages of the arbitration is central to upholding the integrity and fairness of the arbitration. An arbitrator must perform his or her duties impartially, without bias or prejudice, and must not, in performing these duties, by words or conduct manifest partiality, bias, or prejudice, including but not limited to partiality, bias, or prejudice based upon race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual

orientation, socioeconomic status, or the fact that a party might select the arbitrator to serve as an arbitrator in additional cases. After accepting appointment, an arbitrator should avoid entering into any relationship or acquiring any interest that might reasonably create the appearance of partiality, bias, or prejudice. An arbitrator does not become partial, biased, or prejudiced simply by having acquired knowledge of the parties, the issues or arguments, or the applicable law.

Standard 6. Duty to refuse appointment

Notwithstanding any contrary request, consent, or waiver by the parties, a proposed arbitrator must decline appointment if he or she is not able to be impartial.

Standard 7. Disclosure

- (a) **[Intent]** This standard is intended to identify the matters that must be disclosed by a person nominated or appointed as an arbitrator. To the extent that this standard addresses matters that are also addressed by statute, it is intended to include those statutory disclosure requirements, not to eliminate, reduce, or otherwise limit them.
- (b) **[General provisions]** For purposes of this standard:
 - (1) (*Collective bargaining cases excluded*) The terms “cases” and “any arbitration” do not include collective bargaining cases or arbitrations conducted under or arising out of collective bargaining agreements between employers and employees or between their respective representatives.
 - (2) (*Offers of employment or professional relationship*) If an arbitrator has disclosed to the parties in an arbitration that he or she will entertain offers of employment or of professional relationships from a party or lawyer for a party while the arbitration is pending as required by subdivision (b) of standard 12, the arbitrator is not required to disclose to the parties in that arbitration any such offer from a party or lawyer for a party that he or she subsequently receives or accepts while that arbitration is pending.
 - (3) (*Names of parties in cases*) When making disclosures about other pending or prior cases, in order to preserve confidentiality, it is sufficient to give the name of any party who is not a party to the pending arbitration as “claimant” or “respondent” if the party is an individual and not a business or corporate entity.

- (c) **[Time and manner of disclosure]** Within ten calendar days of service of notice of the proposed nomination or appointment, a proposed arbitrator must disclose to all parties in writing all matters listed in subdivisions (d) and (e) of this standard of which the arbitrator is then aware. If an arbitrator subsequently becomes aware of a matter that must be disclosed under either subdivision (d) or (e) of this standard, the arbitrator must disclose that matter to the parties in writing within 10 calendar days after the arbitrator becomes aware of the matter.
- (d) **[Required disclosures]** A person who is nominated or appointed as an arbitrator must disclose all matters that could cause a person aware of the facts to reasonably entertain a doubt that the proposed arbitrator would be able to be impartial, including all of the following:
- (1) (*Family relationships with party*) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate or extended family is a party, a party's spouse or domestic partner, or an officer, director, or trustee of a party.
 - (2) (*Family relationships with lawyer in the arbitration*) The arbitrator, or the spouse, former spouse, domestic partner, child, sibling, or parent of the arbitrator or the arbitrator's spouse or domestic partner is:
 - (A) A lawyer in the arbitration;
 - (B) The spouse or domestic partner of a lawyer in the arbitration;
or
 - (C) Currently associated in the private practice of law with a lawyer in the arbitration.
 - (3) (*Significant personal relationship with party or lawyer for a party*) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family has or has had a significant personal relationship with any party or lawyer for a party.
 - (4) (*Service as arbitrator for a party or lawyer for party*)
 - (A) The arbitrator is serving or, within the preceding five years, has served:

- (i) As a neutral arbitrator in another prior or pending noncollective bargaining case involving a party to the current arbitration or a lawyer for a party.
 - (ii) As a party-appointed arbitrator in another prior or pending noncollective bargaining case for either a party to the current arbitration or a lawyer for a party.
 - (iii) As a neutral arbitrator in another prior or pending noncollective bargaining case in which he or she was selected by a person serving as a party-appointed arbitrator in the current arbitration
- (B) [Case information] If the arbitrator is serving or has served in any of the capacities listed under (A), he or she must disclose:
 - (i) The names of the parties in each prior or pending case and, where applicable, the name of the attorney representing the party in the current arbitration who is involved in the pending case, who was involved in the prior case, or whose current associate is involved in the pending case or was involved in the prior case.
 - (ii) The results of each prior case arbitrated to conclusion, including the date of the arbitration award, identification of the prevailing party, the amount of monetary damages awarded, if any, and the names of the parties' attorneys.
- (C) [Summary of case information] If the total number of the cases disclosed under (A) is greater than five, the arbitrator must provide a summary of these cases that states:
 - (i) The number of pending cases in which the arbitrator is currently serving in each capacity;
 - (ii) The number of prior cases in which the arbitrator previously served in each capacity;
 - (iii) The number of prior cases arbitrated to conclusion; and
 - (iv) The number of such prior cases in which the party to the current arbitration, the party represented by the lawyer for a party in the current arbitration or the party

represented by the party-arbitrator in the current arbitration was the prevailing party.

- (5) (*Compensated service as other dispute resolution neutral*) The arbitrator is serving or has served as a dispute resolution neutral other than an arbitrator in another pending or prior noncollective bargaining case involving a party or lawyer for a party and the arbitrator received or expects to receive any form of compensation for serving in this capacity.
- (A) [Time frame] For purposes of this paragraph (5), “prior case” means any case in which the arbitrator concluded his or her service as a dispute resolution neutral within two years before the date of the arbitrator’s proposed nomination or appointment, but does not include any case in which the arbitrator concluded his or her service before January 1, 2002.
- (B) [Case information] If the arbitrator is serving or has served in any of the capacities listed under this paragraph (5), he or she must disclose:
- (i) The names of the parties in each prior or pending case and, where applicable, the name of the attorney in the current arbitration who is involved in the pending case, who was involved in the prior case, or whose current associate is involved in the pending case or was involved in the prior case;
 - (ii) The dispute resolution neutral capacity (mediator, referee, etc.) in which the arbitrator is serving or served in the case; and
 - (iii) In each such case in which the arbitrator rendered a decision as a temporary judge or referee, the date of the decision, the prevailing party, the amount of monetary damages awarded, if any, and the names of the parties’ attorneys.
- (C) [Summary of case information] If the total number of cases disclosed under this paragraph (5) is greater than five, the arbitrator must also provide a summary of the cases that states:

- (i) The number of pending cases in which the arbitrator is currently serving in each capacity;
 - (ii) The number of prior cases in which the arbitrator previously served in each capacity;
 - (iii) The number of prior cases in which the arbitrator rendered a decision as a temporary judge or referee; and
 - (iv) The number of such prior cases in which the party to the current arbitration or the party represented by the lawyer for a party in the current arbitration was the prevailing party.
- (6) (*Current arrangements for prospective neutral service*) Whether the arbitrator has any current arrangement with a party concerning prospective employment or other compensated service as a dispute resolution neutral or is participating in or, within the last two years, has participated in discussions regarding such prospective employment or service with a party.
- (7) (*Attorney-client relationships*) Any attorney-client relationship the arbitrator has or has had with a party or lawyer for a party. Attorney-client relationships include the following:
 - (A) An officer, a director, or a trustee of a party is or, within the preceding two years, was a client of the arbitrator in the arbitrator's private practice of law or a client of a lawyer with whom the arbitrator is or was associated in the private practice of law;
 - (B) In any other proceeding involving the same issues, the arbitrator gave advice to a party or a lawyer in the arbitration concerning any matter involved in the arbitration; and
 - (C) The arbitrator served as a lawyer for or as an officer of a public agency which is a party and personally advised or in any way represented the public agency concerning the factual or legal issues in the arbitration.
- (8) (*Other professional relationships*) Any other professional relationship not already disclosed under paragraphs (2)-(7) that the

arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family has or has had with a party or lawyer for a party, including the following:

- (A) The arbitrator was associated in the private practice of law with a lawyer in the arbitration within the last two years.
 - (B) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family is or, within the preceding two years, was an employee of or an expert witness or a consultant for a party; and
 - (C) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family is or, within the preceding two years, was an employee of or an expert witness or a consultant for a lawyer in the arbitration.
- (9) (*Financial interests in party*) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family has a financial interest in a party.
- (10) (*Financial interests in subject of arbitration*) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family has a financial interest in the subject matter of the arbitration.
- (11) (*Affected interest*) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate family has an interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the arbitration.
- (12) (*Knowledge of disputed facts*) The arbitrator or a member of the arbitrator's immediate or extended family has personal knowledge of disputed evidentiary facts relevant to the arbitration. A person who is likely to be a material witness in the proceeding is deemed to have personal knowledge of disputed evidentiary facts concerning the proceeding.
- (13) (*Membership in organizations practicing discrimination*) The arbitrator's membership in any organization that practices invidious discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Membership in a religious organization, an official military organization of the United States, or a nonprofit youth organization need not be disclosed unless it would interfere with the arbitrator's proper conduct of the proceeding or would cause a person aware of the fact to reasonably entertain a doubt concerning the arbitrator's ability to act impartially.

- (14) Any other matter that:
- (A) Might cause a person aware of the facts to reasonably entertain a doubt that the arbitrator would be able to be impartial;
 - (B) Leads the proposed arbitrator to believe there is a substantial doubt as to his or her capacity to be impartial, including, but not limited to, bias or prejudice toward a party, lawyer, or law firm in the arbitration; or
 - (C) Otherwise leads the arbitrator to believe that his or her disqualification will further the interests of justice.
- (e) **[Inability to conduct or timely complete proceedings]** In addition to the matters that must be disclosed under subdivision (d), an arbitrator must also disclose:
- (1) If the arbitrator is not able to properly perceive the evidence or properly conduct the proceedings because of a permanent or temporary physical impairment; and
 - (2) Any constraints on his or her availability known to the arbitrator that will interfere with his or her ability to commence or complete the arbitration in a timely manner.
- (f) **[Continuing duty]** An arbitrator's duty to disclose the matters described in subdivisions (d) and (e) of this standard is a continuing duty, applying from service of the notice of the arbitrator's proposed nomination or appointment until the conclusion of the arbitration proceeding.

Comment to Standard 7

This standard requires arbitrators to disclose to all parties, in writing within 10 days of service of notice of their proposed nomination or appointment, all matters they are aware of at that time that could cause a person aware of the facts to reasonably entertain a doubt that the proposed arbitrator would be able to be impartial and to disclose any additional such matters within 10 days of becoming aware of them.

Timely disclosure to the parties is the primary means of ensuring the impartiality of an arbitrator. It provides the parties with the necessary information to make an informed selection of an arbitrator by disqualifying or ratifying the proposed arbitrator following disclosure. See also standard 10, concerning disclosure and disqualification requirements relating to concurrent and

subsequent employment or professional relationships between an arbitrator and a party or attorney in the arbitration. A party may disqualify an arbitrator for failure to comply with statutory disclosure obligations (see Code Civ. Proc., § 1281.91(a)). Failure to disclose, within the time required for disclosure, a ground for disqualification of which the arbitrator was then aware is a ground for *vacatur* of the arbitrator's award (see Code Civ. Proc., § 1286.2(a)(6)(A)).

The arbitrator's overarching duty under this standard, which mirrors the duty set forth in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.9, is to inform parties about matters that could cause a person aware of the facts to reasonably entertain a doubt that the proposed arbitrator would be able to be impartial. While the remaining subparagraphs of (d) require the disclosure of specific interests, relationships, or affiliations, these are only examples of common matters that could cause a person aware of the facts to reasonably entertain a doubt that the arbitrator would be able to be impartial. The absence of the particular interests, relationships, or affiliations listed in the subparagraphs does not necessarily mean that there is no matter that could reasonably raise a question about the arbitrator's ability to be impartial and that therefore must be disclosed. An arbitrator must make determinations concerning disclosure on a case-by-case basis, applying the general criteria for disclosure under paragraph (d).

Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.85 specifically requires that the ethical standards adopted by the Judicial Council address the disclosure of interests, relationships, or affiliations that may constitute conflicts of interest, including prior service as an arbitrator or other dispute resolution neutral entity. Section 1281.85 further provides that the standards "shall be consistent with the standards established for arbitrators in the judicial arbitration program and may expand but may not limit the disclosure and disqualification requirements established by this chapter [chapter 2 of title 9 of part III, Code of Civil Procedure, sections 1281–1281.95]."

Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.9 already establishes detailed requirements concerning disclosures by arbitrators, including a specific requirement that arbitrators disclose the existence of any ground specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 170.1 for disqualification of a judge. This standard does not eliminate or otherwise limit those requirements; in large part, it simply consolidates and integrates those existing statutory disclosure requirements by topic area. This standard does, however, expand upon or clarify the existing statutory disclosure requirements in the following ways:

- Requiring arbitrators to disclose to the parties any matter about which they become aware after the time for making an initial disclosure has expired, within 10 calendar days after the arbitrator becomes aware of the matter (subdivision (f)).
- Expanding required disclosures about the relationships or affiliations of an arbitrator's family members to include those of an arbitrator's domestic partner (subdivisions (d)(1) and (2); see also definitions of immediate and extended family in standard 2).
- Requiring arbitrators, in addition to making statutorily required disclosures regarding prior service as an arbitrator for a party or attorney for a party, to disclose prior services both as neutral arbitrator selected by a party arbitrator in the current arbitration and as any other type of dispute resolution neutral for a party or attorney in the arbitration (e.g., temporary judge, mediator, or referee) (subdivisions (d)(4)(C) and (5)).

- Requiring the arbitrator to disclose if he or she or a member of his or her immediate family is or was an employee, expert witness, or consultant for a party or a lawyer in the arbitration (subdivisions (d)(8)(A) and (B)).
- Requiring the arbitrator to disclose if he or she or a member of his or her immediate family has an interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the arbitration (subdivision (d)(11)).
- If a disclosure includes information about five or more cases, requiring arbitrators to provide a summary of that information (subdivisions (d)(4) and (5)).
- Requiring arbitrators to disclose membership in organizations that practice invidious discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation (subdivision (d)(13)).
- Requiring the arbitrator to disclose any constraints on his or her availability known to the arbitrator that will interfere with his or her ability to commence or complete the arbitration in a timely manner (subdivision (d)).
- Clarifying that the duty to make disclosures is a continuing obligation, requiring disclosure of matters that were not known at the time of nomination or appointment but that become known afterward (subdivision (e)).

It is good practice for an arbitrator to ask each participant to make an effort to disclose any matters that may affect the arbitrator's ability to be impartial.

Standard 8. Additional disclosures in consumer arbitrations administered by a provider organization

(a) [General provisions]

- (1) *(Reliance on information provided by provider organization).* Except as to the information in (c)(1), an arbitrator may rely on information supplied by the administering provider organization in making the disclosures required by this standard. If the information that must be disclosed is available on the Internet, the arbitrator may comply with the obligation to disclose this information by providing the Internet address at which the information is located and notifying the party that the arbitrator will supply hard copies of this information upon request.
- (2) *(Reliance on representation that not a consumer arbitration)* An arbitrator is not required to make the disclosures required by this standard if he or she reasonably believes that the arbitration is not a consumer arbitration based on reasonable reliance on a consumer

party's representation that the arbitration is not a consumer arbitration.

- (b) **[Additional disclosures required]** In addition to the disclosures required under standard 7, in a consumer arbitration as defined in standard 2 in which a dispute resolution provider organization is coordinating, administering, or providing the arbitration services, a person who is nominated or appointed as an arbitrator on or after January 1, 2003 must disclose the following within the time and in the same manner as the disclosures required under standard 7(c):
- (1) *(Relationships between the provider organization and party or lawyer in arbitration)* Any significant past, present, or currently expected financial or professional relationship or affiliation between the administering dispute resolution provider organization and a party or lawyer in the arbitration. Information that must be disclosed under this standard includes:
- (A) A party, a lawyer in the arbitration, or a law firm with which a lawyer in the arbitration is currently associated is a member of the provider organization.
 - (B) Within the preceding two years the provider organization has received a gift, bequest, or favor from a party, a lawyer in the arbitration, or a law firm with which a lawyer in the arbitration is currently associated.
 - (C) The provider organization has entered into, or the arbitrator currently expects that the provider organization will enter into, an agreement or relationship with any party or lawyer in the arbitration or a law firm with which a lawyer in the arbitration is currently associated under which the provider organization will administer, coordinate, or provide dispute resolution services in other non-collective bargaining matters or will provide other consulting services for that party, lawyer, or law firm.
 - (D) The provider organization is coordinating, administering, or providing dispute resolution services or has coordinated, administered, or provided such services in another pending or prior noncollective bargaining case in which a party or lawyer in the arbitration was a party or a lawyer. For purposes of this paragraph, "prior case" means a case in which the dispute

resolution neutral affiliated with the provider organization concluded his or her service within the two years before the date of the arbitrator's proposed nomination or appointment, but does not include any case in which the dispute resolution neutral concluded his or her service before July 1, 2002.

- (2) (*Case information*) If the provider organization is acting or has acted in any of the capacities described in paragraph (1)(D), the arbitrator must disclose:
 - (A) The names of the parties in each prior or pending case and, where applicable, the name of the attorney in the current arbitration who is involved in the pending case or who was involved in the prior case;
 - (B) The type of dispute resolution services (arbitration, mediation, reference, etc.) coordinated, administered, or provided by the provider organization in the case; and
 - (C) In each prior case in which a dispute resolution neutral affiliated with the provider organization rendered a decision as an arbitrator, a temporary judge appointed under article VI, § 4 of the California Constitution, or a referee appointed under Code of Civil Procedure sections 638 or 639, the date of the decision, the prevailing party, the amount of monetary damages awarded, if any, and the names of the parties' attorneys.
- (3) (*Summary of case information*) If the total number of cases disclosed under paragraph (1)(D) is greater than five, the arbitrator must also provide a summary of these cases that states:
 - (A) The number of pending cases in which the provider organization is currently providing each type of dispute resolution services;
 - (B) The number of prior cases in which the provider organization previously provided each type of dispute resolution services;
 - (C) The number of such prior cases in which a neutral affiliated with the provider organization rendered a decision as an arbitrator, a temporary judge, or a referee; and

- (D) The number of prior cases in which the party to the current arbitration or the party represented by the lawyer in the current arbitration was the prevailing party.
- (c) **[Relationship between provider organization and arbitrator].** If a relationship or affiliation is disclosed under paragraph (b), the arbitrator must also provide information about the following:
- (1) Any financial relationship or affiliation the arbitrator has with the provider organization other than receiving referrals of cases, including whether the arbitrator has a financial interest in the provider organization or is an employee of the provider organization;
 - (2) The provider organization's process and criteria for recruiting, screening, and training the panel of arbitrators from which the arbitrator in this case is to be selected;
 - (3) The provider organization's process for identifying, recommending, and selecting potential arbitrators for specific cases; and
 - (4) Any role the provider organization plays in ruling on requests for disqualification of the arbitrator.
- (d) **[Effective date]** The provisions of this standard take effect on January 1, 2003. Persons who are serving in arbitrations in which they were appointed to serve as arbitrators before January 1, 2003, are not subject to this standard in those pending arbitrations.

Comment to Standard 8

This standard only applies in consumer arbitrations in which a dispute resolution provider organization is administering the arbitration. Like standard 7, this standard expands upon the existing statutory disclosure requirements. Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.95 requires arbitrators in certain construction defect arbitrations to make disclosures concerning relationships between their employers or arbitration services and the parties in the arbitration. This standard requires arbitrators in all consumer arbitrations to disclose any financial or professional relationship between the administering provider organization and any party, attorney, or law firm in the arbitration and, if any such relationship exists, then the arbitrator must also disclose his or her relationship with the dispute resolution provider organization. This standard does not require an arbitrator to disclose if the provider organization has a financial interest in a party or lawyer in the arbitration or if a party or lawyer in the arbitration has a financial interest in the provider organization because provider organizations are prohibited under Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.92 from administering any consumer arbitration where any such relationship exists.

Subdivision (b). Currently expected relationships or affiliations that must be disclosed include all relationships or affiliations that the arbitrator, at the time the disclosure is made, expects will be formed. For example, if the arbitrator knows that the administering provider organization has agreed in concept to enter into a business relationship with a party, but they have not yet signed a written agreement formalizing that relationship, this would be a “currently expected” relationship that the arbitrator would be required to disclose.

Standard 9. Arbitrators’ duty to inform themselves about matters to be disclosed

- (a) **[General duty to inform him or herself]** A person who is nominated or appointed as an arbitrator must make a reasonable effort to inform himself or herself of matters that must be disclosed under standards 7 and 8.
- (b) **[Obligation regarding extended family]** An arbitrator can fulfill the obligation under this standard to inform himself or herself of relationships or other matters involving his or her extended family and former spouse that are required to be disclosed under standard 7 by:
 - (1) Seeking information about these relationships and matters from the members of his or her immediate family and any members of his or her extended family living in his or her household; and
 - (2) Declaring in writing that he or she has made the inquiry in (1).
- (c) **[Obligation regarding relationships with associates of lawyer in the arbitration]** An arbitrator can fulfill the obligation under this standard to inform himself or herself of relationships with any lawyer associated in the practice of law with the lawyer in the arbitration that are required to be disclosed under standard 7 by:
 - (1) Informing the lawyer in the arbitration, in writing, of all such relationships within the arbitrator’s knowledge and asking the lawyer if the lawyer is aware of any other such relationships;
 - (2) Declaring in writing that he or she has made the inquiry in (1) and attaching to this declaration copies of his or her inquiry and any response from the lawyer in the arbitration.
- (d) **[Obligation regarding service as a neutral other than an arbitrator before July 1, 2002]** An arbitrator can fulfill the obligation under this standard to inform himself or herself of his or her service as a dispute

resolution neutral other than as an arbitrator in cases that commenced prior to July 1, 2002 by:

- (1) Asking any dispute resolution provider organization that administered those prior services for this information; and
 - (2) Declaring in writing that he or she has made the inquiry in (1) and attaching to this declaration copies of his or her inquiry and any response from the provider organization.
- (e) **[Obligation regarding relationships with provider organization]** An arbitrator can fulfill his or her obligation under this standard to inform himself or herself of the information that is required to be disclosed under standard 8 by:
- (1) Asking the dispute resolution provider organization for this information; and
 - (2) Declaring in writing that he or she has made the inquiry in (1) and attaching to this declaration copies of his or her inquiry and any response from the provider organization.

Comment to Standard 9

This standard expands arbitrators existing duty of reasonable inquiry that applies with respect to financial interests under Code of Civil Procedure section 170.1(a)(3), to require arbitrators to make a reasonable effort to inform themselves about all matters that must be disclosed. This standard also clarifies what constitutes a reasonable effort by an arbitrator to inform himself or herself about specified matters, including relationships or other matters concerning his or her extended family and relationships with attorneys associated in the practice of law with the attorney in the arbitration (such as associates encompassed within the term “lawyer for a party”).

Standard 10. Disqualification

- (a) An arbitrator is disqualified if:
- (1) The arbitrator fails to comply with his or her obligation to make disclosures and a party serves a notice of disqualification in the manner and within the time specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91;
 - (2) The arbitrator complies with his or her obligation to make disclosures within 10 calendar days of service of notice of the

proposed nomination or appointment and, based on that disclosure, a party serves a notice of disqualification in the manner and within the time specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91;

- (3) The arbitrator makes a required disclosure more than 10 calendar days after service of notice of the proposed nomination or appointment and, based on that disclosure, a party serves a notice of disqualification in the manner and within the time specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91; or
 - (4) A party becomes aware that an arbitrator has made a material omission or material misrepresentation in his or her disclosure and, within 15 days after becoming aware of the omission or misrepresentation and within the time specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91(c), the party serves a notice of disqualification that clearly describes the material omission or material misrepresentation and how and when the party became aware of this omission or misrepresentation; or
 - (5) If any ground specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 170.1 exists and the party makes a demand that the arbitrator disqualify himself or herself in the manner and within the time specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91(d).
- (b) For purposes of this standard, “obligation to make disclosure” means an arbitrator’s obligation to make disclosures under standards 7 or 8 or Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.9.
- (c) Notwithstanding any contrary request, consent, or waiver by the parties, an arbitrator must disqualify himself or herself if he or she concludes at any time during the arbitration that he or she is not able to conduct the arbitration impartially.

Comment to Standard 10

Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91 already establishes requirements concerning disqualification of arbitrators. This standard does not eliminate or otherwise limit those requirements or change existing authority or procedures for challenging an arbitrator’s failure to disqualify himself or herself. The provisions of subdivisions (a)(1), (2), and (5) restate existing disqualification procedures under section 1281.91; (b) and (d) when an arbitrator makes, or fails to make, initial disclosures or where a section 170.1 ground exists. The provisions of subdivisions (a)(3) and (4) clarify the requirements relating to disqualification based on disclosure made by the arbitrator after appointment or based on the discovery by the party of a material omission or misrepresentation in the arbitrator’s disclosure.

Standard 11. Duty to refuse gift, bequest, or favor

- (a) An arbitrator must not, under any circumstances, accept a gift, bequest, favor, or honoraria from a party or any other person or entity whose interests are reasonably likely to come before the arbitrator in the arbitration.
- (b) From service of notice of appointment or appointment until two years after the conclusion of the arbitration, an arbitrator must not, under any circumstances, accept a gift, bequest, favor, or honoraria from a party or any other person or entity whose interests have come before the arbitrator in the arbitration.
- (c) An arbitrator must discourage members of his or her family residing in his or her household from accepting a gift, bequest, favor, or honoraria that the arbitrator would be prohibited from accepting under subdivisions (a) or (b).
- (d) This standard does not prohibit an arbitrator from demanding or receiving a fee for services or expenses.

Comment to Standard 11

Gifts and favors do not include any rebate or discount made available in the regular course of business to members of the public.

Standard 12. Duties and limitations regarding future professional relationships or employment

- (a) **[Offers as lawyer, expert witness, or consultant]** From the time of appointment until the conclusion of the arbitration, an arbitrator must not entertain or accept any offers of employment or new professional relationships as a lawyer, an expert witness, or a consultant from a party or a lawyer for a party in the pending arbitration.
- (b) **[Offers for other employment or professional relationships]** In addition to the disclosures required by standards 7 and 8, within ten calendar days of service of notice of the proposed nomination or appointment, a proposed arbitrator must disclose to all parties in writing if, while that arbitration is pending, he or she will entertain offers of employment or new professional relationships in any capacity other than as a lawyer, expert witness, or consultant from a party or a lawyer

for a party, including offers to serve as a dispute resolution neutral in another case. A party may disqualify the arbitrator based on this disclosure by serving a notice of disqualification in the manner and within the time specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.91(b).

- (c) **[Acceptance of offers prohibited unless intent disclosed]** If an arbitrator fails to make the disclosure required by subdivision (b) of this standard, from the time of appointment until the conclusion of the arbitration the arbitrator must not entertain or accept any such offers of employment or new professional relationships, including offers to serve as a dispute resolution neutral.
- (d) **[Relationships and use of confidential information related to the arbitrated case]** An arbitrator must not at any time:
 - (1) Without the informed written consent of all parties, enter into any professional relationship or accept any professional employment as a lawyer, an expert witness, or a consultant relating to the case arbitrated; or
 - (2) Without the informed written consent of the party, enter into any professional relationship or accept employment in another matter in which information that he or she has received in confidence from a party by reason of serving as an arbitrator in a case is material.

Standard 13. Conduct of proceeding

- (a) An arbitrator must conduct the arbitration fairly, promptly, and diligently and in accordance with the applicable law relating to the conduct of arbitration proceedings.
- (b) In making the decision, an arbitrator must not be swayed by partisan interests, public clamor, or fear of criticism.

Comment to Standard 13

Subdivision (a). The arbitrator's duty to dispose of matters promptly and diligently must not take precedence over the arbitrator's duty to dispose of matters fairly.

Conducting the arbitration in a procedurally fair manner includes conducting a balanced process in which each party is given an opportunity to participate. When one but not all parties are unrepresented, an arbitrator must ensure that the party appearing without counsel has an adequate opportunity to be heard and involved. Conducting the arbitration promptly and

diligently requires expeditious management of all stages of the proceeding and concluding the case as promptly as the circumstances reasonably permit. During an arbitration, an arbitrator may discuss the issues, arguments, and evidence with the parties or their counsel, make interim rulings, and otherwise to control or direct the arbitration. This standard is not intended to restrict these activities.

The arbitrator's duty to uphold the integrity and fairness of the arbitration process includes an obligation to make reasonable efforts to prevent delaying tactics, harassment of any participant, or other abuse of the arbitration process. It is recognized, however, that the arbitrator's reasonable efforts may not successfully control all conduct of the participants.

For the general law relating to the conduct of arbitration proceedings, see chapter 3 of title 9 of part III of the Code of Civil Procedure, sections 1282–1284.2, relating to the conduct of arbitration proceedings. See also Code of Civil Procedure section 1286.2 concerning an arbitrator's unreasonable refusal to grant a continuance as grounds for *vacatur* of the award.

Standard 14. Ex parte communications

- (a) An arbitrator must not initiate, permit, or consider any ex parte communications or consider other communications made to the arbitrator outside the presence of all of the parties concerning a pending or impending arbitration, except as permitted by this standard, by agreement of the parties, or by applicable law.
- (b) An arbitrator may communicate with a party in the absence of other parties about administrative matters, such as setting the time and place of hearings or making other arrangements for the conduct of the proceedings, as long as the arbitrator reasonably believes that the communication will not result in a procedural or tactical advantage for any party. When such a discussion occurs, the arbitrator must promptly inform the other parties of the communication and must give the other parties an opportunity to respond before making any final determination concerning the matter discussed.
- (c) An arbitrator may obtain the advice of a disinterested expert on the subject matter of the arbitration if the arbitrator notifies the parties of the person consulted and the substance of the advice and affords the parties a reasonable opportunity to respond.

Comment to Standard 14

See also Code of Civil Procedure sections 1282.2(e) regarding the arbitrator's authority to hear a matter when a party fails to appear and 1282.2(g) regarding the procedures that must be followed if an arbitrator intends to base an award on information not obtained at the hearing.

Standard 15. Confidentiality

- (a) An arbitrator must not use or disclose information that he or she received in confidence by reason of serving as an arbitrator in a case to gain personal advantage. This duty applies from acceptance of appointment and continues after the conclusion of the arbitration.
- (b) An arbitrator must not inform anyone of the award in advance of the time that the award is given to all parties. This standard does not prohibit an arbitrator from providing all parties with a tentative or draft decision for review or from providing an award to an assistant or to the provider organization that is coordinating, administering, or providing the arbitration services in the case for purposes of copying and distributing the award to all parties.

Standard 16. Compensation

- (a) An arbitrator must not charge any fee for services or expenses that is in any way contingent on the result or outcome of the arbitration.
- (b) Before accepting appointment, an arbitrator, a dispute resolution provider organization, or another person or entity acting on the arbitrator's behalf must inform all parties in writing of the terms and conditions of the arbitrator's compensation. This information must include any basis to be used in determining fees and any special fees for cancellation, research and preparation time, or other purposes.

Standard 17. Marketing

- (a) An arbitrator must be truthful and accurate in marketing his or her services and must not make any representation that directly or indirectly implies favoritism or a specific outcome. An arbitrator must ensure that his or her personal marketing activities and any activities carried out on his or her behalf, including any activities of a provider organization with which the arbitrator is affiliated, comply with this requirement.
- (b) An arbitrator must not solicit business from a participant in the arbitration while the arbitration is pending.

Comment to Standard 17

Subdivision (b). This provision is not intended to prohibit an arbitrator from accepting another arbitration from a party or attorney in the arbitration while the first matter is pending, as long as the arbitrator complies with the provisions of standard 12 and there was no express solicitation of this business by the arbitrator.

Drafter's Notes

Standards 1–17 implement Code of Civil Procedure section 1281.85, which requires the Judicial Council to adopt ethics standards for all neutral arbitrators serving in arbitrations pursuant to an arbitration agreement. Among other things, they address the disclosure of interests, relationships, or affiliations that may constitute conflicts of interest, the acceptance of gifts, the establishment of future professional relationships, ex-parte communication, fees, and marketing.